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SUBJECT: VIEWS ON SUDAN -- MEETINGS WITH UK, FRANCE,  
CONTACT GROUP AND UN/AU MEDIATION TEAM

Classified By: AF/FO - PCARTER

11. (C) Summary: Department AF and S/WCI officials met March 10-11 with UK and French, Sudan Contact Group, and UN/AU mediation team members to discuss recent Sudanese developments. UK and France are deeply disappointed at Arab and African reactions to ICC issuance of an arrest warrant for President Bashir and Sudan's subsequent expulsion of NGO's. They saw no chance of preventing Bashir's attendance at March 31 Arab League summit in Doha. The French fear that it is the P-3, not Sudan, who have become isolated as a result of the ICC action, and intend to lobby against the danger that some African states could withdraw from the ICC. UK and France are concerned as to how to fill humanitarian gaps left by NGO expulsion particularly in the health and sanitation sectors. Contact Group members shared concerns. They noted that SPLM members of the Government of National Unity had not been consulted and that this threatened continuation of the GNU. All desired to maintain a focus on long term strategic issues such as implementation of the North/South Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and continuation of a Darfur political peace process under UN/AU mediation. The Mediators asked that Western states not pressure the GOS about the NGO issue to the extent it would jeopardize GOS participation in the Darfur peace process. Contact Group members are concerned that the Government of South Sudan is inadequately preparing to deal with a pending financial crisis caused by the drop in oil revenues, with sufficient funds in hand to cover only the next few months expenses. Contact group members France, Norway and Canada reported on their respective contact with JEM and SLA/Abdul Wahid. Wahid remains intransigent that he will not participate in the Doha peace talks. JEM will do so under certain conditions. AU/UN Mediation Deputy head Ennifar briefed the contact group on the first round of talks in Doha, expressing regret that more had not been achieved, but confidence that the process would continue. Mediation next steps are to bring GOS and SLA/Unity negotiators together soon to replicate the initial GOS/JEM agreement. Mediators recognize the need to bring leaders of the Fur ethnic group into the negotiation process and are reaching out to Abdul Wahid and others. Mediation members wish to visit Washington after their March 26 briefing to the UN Security Council. End Summary.

US-UK-French Technical Meeting

12. (C) A Department team consisting of AF/SPG members Pamela Fierst and Michael Arietti and S/WCI Brendan Doherty met March 10 in London with UK Sudan Special Envoy Michael

O'Neill and other FCO reps and with a French Sudan team headed by Eric Chevallier. UK and French reps expressed deep concern over the GOS decision to expel international NGO's which are providing critical assistance to IDP's in Darfur. O'Neill said the UK's temperature is rising over the situation and UK PM Brown is following the it closely. PM Brown wants advice on a series of calibrated steps to potentially take against the GOS and wishes to engage at the political level to address a looming humanitarian crisis with states which may have influence with Sudan, such as China, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and others. The French have made similar efforts with African and Arab states, but were extremely disappointed at the degree of support they found for President Bashir. The French found most states responded that the current situation has been created by the issuance of the ICC arrest warrant and did not seem focused on the Darfur humanitarian situation. The French believe that Bashir's position has been strengthened and that it is the P-3 who are currently isolated. The French hope that an effort to bypass African governments and appeal directly to African public opinion will be more productive. Both the UK and France believe that any effort to prevent Bashir from attending the late March Arab Summit in Doha would be futile.

13. (C) There was general agreement that the SPLM members of the GNU had not been consulted about the expulsion decision and this would raise new questions about the durability of the GNU. Meeting participants agreed on the need to maintain a clear focus on implementation of the CPA to avoid even greater problems in the future. It is also important to continue to support the UN/AU mediation process taking place in Doha. Both the UK and France favor further efforts to seek cooperation with China and Russia regarding Sudan, suggesting further consultations take place in New York.

#### Sudan Contact Group Meeting

14. (C) Members of the Sudan Contact Group (EU, France, Norway, Netherlands, UK, Canada, and the US) met March 11 in Brussels to review recent events in Sudan. There was general concern over the GOS decision to expel international NGO's, but pessimism that the GOS would reverse this decision. There was a willingness to see what could be done on a practical basis to maintain support for Darfuri IDP's including greater efforts to encourage Arab and African states to focus on the humanitarian consequences of the GOS action.

15. (C) Norway expressed concern over the financial situation of the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) which it believes has only \$500 million left in its accounts and which will face a significant financial crisis soon. The GOSS does not seem to have a strategy for dealing with this situation and has been reluctant to follow outside advice. All Contact Group members expressed concern over the slow pace of implementing the CPA which raises serious concerns over the scheduled 2011 referendum on the future of South Sudan.

16. (C) France, Norway, and Canada reported on recent contacts with Darfur rebel groups. The French had found the JEM to be toughening its position, claiming that after the ICC arrest warrant, Bashir was no longer a legitimate interlocutor. Norway had also spoken to JEM and believes that JEM will continue to participate in the Doha process. The Canadians had met the previous day with Fur leader Abdul Wahid and found him intransigent in rejecting the Doha process. Wahid had repeated his call for regime change and said this could only be achieved through armed struggle. He is concerned that the JEM has achieved undue prominence due to its military strength.

#### Briefing by UN/AU Mediation

17. (C) AU/UN Deputy Mediator Azouz Ennifar provided a detailed summary to the Contact Group of the meetings in Doha that had led up to the signing in Doha of the Feb 17 goodwill

and confidence building agreement between JEM and the GOS. (Chief Mediator Bassole had been scheduled to brief the contact group, but was unable to do so at the last minute.) Ennifar characterized the JEM delegation as arrogant, feeling strong and negotiating with little flexibility. He said Doha's main focus will be a cessation of hostilities and creating a mechanism by which to seek final settlement. The mediators abandoned their original goal of a Framework agreement amid JEM opposition and instead focused on a less ambitious joint statement. JEM had consistently emphasized the need for a prisoner release, while the GOS wanted a cessation of hostilities linked to a prisoner release. Ennifar thought it important that JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim had been willing to meet privately with senior GOS Presidential Advisor Nafie. Although the Feb. 17 agreement included a commitment to the release of prisoners, this has not been done satisfactorily. Both JEM and the GOS had released some prisoners, but the mediation has not been able to verify who was released and JEM has said that it does not know most of those released by Khartoum. The mediation is now seeking lists of prisoners from both parties with the aim of confirming who has been or should be released.

¶18. (C) The mediation's next step is to organize talks in Doha between the GOS and the SLA-Unity rebel group, possibly as a separate track to be folded in later. The mediators want an inclusive Doha process but reject JEM's attempts to organize all Darfur rebel groups under its umbrella (the French delivered the same message to JEM). The mediation thought Libya's efforts to unite other smaller rebel movements could be helpful, especially if it reduced their risk of spoiling. Libya apparently assured Qatar they will not seek to create a parallel process. Bassole has been unsuccessful in convincing Fur leader Abdul Wahid to participate in the talks, but is continuing this effort. He also wants civil society groups to be represented in the talks at a later stage. Ennifar said that the mediation recognizes the need to ensure that regional states, such as Egypt, Libya, Eritrea and Chad, support the mediation process. Bassole has encouraged the government of Qatar to use its influence to bring this about. Ennifar said that the mediation has also repeatedly invited Minni Minawi to attend the Doha talks, but Minawi had not done so. Ennifar said Minawi is deeply dejected after having seen both his political and military base weaken since signing the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement.

¶19. (C) Ennifar said that the mediation has protested to the GOS over its decision to expel international NGO's from Darfur, underlining that the Feb. 17 agreement had committed both parties to "guarantee the smooth and unobstructed flow of relief assistance to the needy people without any obstacles or constraints." He said Bashir made clear that the decision was irreversible. While Chief Mediator Bassole is concerned over GOS actions, he had specifically asked Ennifar to convey to the Contact Group his wish that Western states not react by putting so much pressure on the GOS that it would harm the Doha political negotiation process. Bassole is also very concerned over signs of increased military activity along the Chad/Sudan border and wants greater efforts made to defuse Chad/Sudan tensions.

¶10. (C) Ennifar said there a time would come for more direct Contact Group involvement in the peace process but it was not at this stage. In the meantime, however, the Contact Group could be immediately helpful in: calling on JEM to be inclusive, pressuring Wahid to enter the process, trying to unify SLA-Unity with smaller armed groups, ensuring no parallel processes developed especially with Libya, and encouraging GOS to improve IDP conditions.

¶11. (C) Ennifar confirmed that Bassole is scheduled to brief the UN Security Council on March 26. He suggested that he visit Washington after his New York meetings.